By the King.

A Proclamation, commanding the due execution of the Laws made for setting the Poor on Work.

Hereas nothing is more agreeable to the true Rules of Charitie, and Policie, then the relieving of the truly indigent and impotent Poore, and the setting on Worke of those who are able to labour: And whereas divers good Lawes have with great providence been made heretofore to that purpose, the neglect whereof is the occasion of much disorder, whereby the poorer sort grow to idlenesse, and consequently run into many inconveniences: His Majesty therefore, in his great Wisdome and Princely Providence, for the good and prosperitie of his people, (by the advice of his Privie Councell, and of his Judges) doth straightly charge and command, That all the Lawes heretofore made, and now standing in force, for the relieke of the Indigent, and Impotent poore, for binding out of Apprentices, for providing of Stocks, and forsetting the Poore on Worke, be duely and carefully put in execution. And whereas by the Lawes of this Realm, Inhabitants of each Parish, where such Parish is of sufficient abilitie, ought to provide for their own Poore in all the Cases aforesaid, and where the Parish shall not be of ability so to do, the whole Hundred, Lathe or Wapentake is chargeable therewith: But if that also, by reason of the multitude of the Poore, or want of ability of the Inhabitants, be not sufficient, That then the whole County is bound to contribute thereunto, whereof the Justices of Peace of each County at their Generall or Quarter Sessions are to take speciall care, and there order the same accordingly. To the end that a due preparation may be made herein before the Generall

20 May 1640

Sessions in those Counties, especially where, upon any accident, there hath fallen, or shall fall out a more speciall occasion to provide Stocks, and to set the Poore on work; His Majesty doth hereby straightly charge and command, That the Ministers, Church-wardens, and Over-seers for the Poore in every Parish, do forthwith assemble together, and take these things into their serious consideration; And thereof with all speed advertise the next Justice of Peace according to the Law; And that the Justices of Peace in their severall divisions, do also meet at some convenient times and places, to understand the true State of the poore in those parts, and thereof give true and full Information to the rest of the Justices of Peace at the next Generall or Quarter Sessions; And that at those Sessions, they all take the same into their best and most serious considerations, and settle and order the same accordingly, as that which doth greatly tend to the glory of God, and the honour of his Majesties Government, and will very much conduce to the peace, quiet, and prosperitie of the whole Kingdom.

And His Majestie doth further charge and require his Judges in their severall Circuits, to take an exact Account, how these things have been, and shall be, from time to time observed, and what the successe thereof shall be: from whom his Majesty will expect to be truly informed at their returns out of their Circuits. And his Majesties expresse pleasure and Royall Command is, That all, and every Sheriffs, Majors, Justices of Peace, Constables, Church-wardens, Over-seers of the Poore, Headboroughs, Tythingmen, and all other his Officers, Ministers, and loving Subjects, in their severall places, do faithfully and diligently observe, execute, and perform all and every the premisses; as they tender his Majesties favour, and would avoid his displeasure for the neglect thereof, at their utmost perils.

Given at the Court at Whitehall this twentieth day of May, in the sixteenth yeer of His Majesties Reign.

God save the King.

¶ Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie: And by the Assignes of John Bill. 1640.

Steele 1818 (2)